

FACTORS THAT IMPACT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, MENTAL HEALTH, AND AFFECT THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF MEDICAL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines the relationship between quality of life, mental health, and academic performance among medical students, considering the intrinsic challenges of the course and external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The integrative review reveals the negative impacts of stress, burnout, and perfectionism, as well as the mitigating role of extracurricular activities, provided they are balanced with academic demands. The study emphasizes the need for psychological and academic support interventions, suggesting that educational institutions adopt a multidimensional approach to improve both the academic performance and well-being of medical students.

Keywords: Student mental health; Stress coping; Educational interventions; Extracurricular activities

INTRODUCTION:

The transition to university life represents a significant change in students' lives, especially for those studying medicine, due to the rigor and high expectations of the course (Monteiro et al., 2005; Pires et al., 2020). Medical students face challenges that can negatively impact their mental health and academic performance. While the course develops essential skills, it also imposes a burden that can lead to stress, burnout, and a decline in quality of life (Anversa et al., 2018; Aquino et al., 2022). On the other hand, participation in extracurricular activities can improve well-being and academic performance, but it must be balanced to avoid adverse effects (Almeida & Nogueira, 2002).

METHODOLOGY:

The integrative literature review was conducted based on a systematic search of scientific articles published between 2002 and 2022. The research was carried out in renowned databases such as PubMed, SciELO, Google Scholar, Web of Science, and PSYCINFO, focusing on studies that analyzed the relationship between quality of life, mental health, and academic performance of medical students. Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies that offered a robust view of the factors analyzed were selected. Strict inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to ensure the relevance and quality of the articles reviewed.

RESULTS:

The studies reviewed indicate that factors such as stress, burnout, and perfectionism are associated with a decline in academic performance and quality of life among medical students. Participation in extracurricular activities can act as a mitigating factor, provided it is balanced with academic demands. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified these challenges, increasing levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among students, which highlights the need for structured psychological and academic support interventions (Table 1).

Table 1. Factors impacting quality of life, mental health, and academic performance

FACTOR ANALYSED	IMPACT	CONCLUSION
Stress and burnout	Reduced academic performance and quality of life	Need for interventions to mitigate these negative effects
Perfectionism	Increased risk of burnout	Importance of strategies to reduce perfectionism among students
Extracurricular activities	Improved adaptation and academic performance (when balanced)	Should be encouraged, but in moderation to avoid overload
COVID-19 pandemic	Increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression	Reinforcement of the need for psychological and academic support.

Stigma and Lack of Time	Reluctance to seek help for mental health problems	Creating a more accessible and welcoming environment for psychological support for students
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CONCLUSION

The study concludes that educational institutions should adopt a practical and multidimensional approach that addresses both the academic and mental health challenges faced by medical students. Strategies such as mental health promotion, effective time management, emotional support, and the creation of an academic environment that values student well-being are essential. The implementation of these strategies can improve academic performance and mental health, preparing future doctors for professional challenges with a better quality of life.

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